

Psychiatrist Shortage Costs Montana \$2.8 million Yearly

In June 2016, the Montana Healthcare Foundation conducted a statewide survey to study the impact of our state's psychiatrist shortage. The survey yielded responses from 35 healthcare organizations, including community health centers, mental health centers, state and private hospitals, drug and alcohol treatment centers, tribal health facilities and providers in the Indian Health Service.

\$2.8 million in healthcare funds leave Montana every year to pay for critical gaps left by our local psychiatrist shortage.

Out-of-state services purchased by Montana healthcare organizations include about \$2 million in temporary (locums) psychiatrists, \$400,000 in telepsychiatry services, and \$400,000 in recruitment costs.

About 70% of respondents indicated that hiring a psychiatrist is “nearly impossible” and 100% of respondents supported the creation of a Montana-based psychiatry residency training track.

The Billings Clinic is leading an effort to create a Montana-based psychiatry residency training track. This initiative is supported in part by a grant from the Montana Healthcare Foundation.

The Billings Clinic is also working with the Montana Graduate Medical Education Council to secure funding through the Office of the Commissioner for Higher Education.

Ultimately, the Montana-based psychiatry residency training track will graduate up to 4 psychiatrists annually. Based on the experience of similar training tracks, over 63% of graduates are expected to remain in Montana after graduation.

Additionally, the presence of a local psychiatry training track will make it easier to attract high quality psychiatrists who are looking to join an academic program.